

SGI Greens February 2023 Newsletter

Greetings

Welcome to Saanich-Gulf Islands (SGI) News and Events for February, just in time for the busy weekend ahead featuring the March and Rally for Old Growth and the Coldest Night of the Year! Read on for a report from the SGI EDA (Electoral District Association) board chair, news from the BC Greens, an inspiring gardening message from Gary and Nancy, and much more. As always we welcome feedback and suggestions, and especially contributions to the newsletter.

Notes from Elizabeth

Thanks to all SGI Greens!

It was great to see so many of you in the national Town Hall on February 7th. We will be holding leadership town halls every month and choosing different times, so we in BC are not perpetually operating on Ottawa time!

I am really excited about the reaction to holding as many "teach-ins" for Earth Day as possible. We may be having two events within Saanich-Gulf Islands!

Let me know if you want to get involved.

Hoping to see many of you on the March for Old Growth on Saturday!

~Elizabeth

Saanich-Gulf Islands EDA report

February is a time of rest and contemplation for many of us. The garden begins to beckon to us as the days lengthen and warm up and the urge to go for a walk in a natural space becomes too strong to resist.

For the SGI EDA, this is a time to make plans, create buttons and other materials and generally just stay in touch. As the weather warms and the year moves on, there will be planning for big events like the AGM and our annual summer picnic. Our executive has decided to hold the AGM in October this year, so stay tuned for further details.

We are looking forward to the large Old-Growth Rally on February 25th and hope to see many of you there. The pandemic had the effect of quashing citizen participation and this event is a coming-out party, of sorts.

Elizabeth May is contacting Greens across the country to join her and the Greens in Earth Day events on April 22. Please stay tuned as your SGI EDA considers what events we wish to bring forward to our supporters.

BC Greens News and Events

Jo-Ann Roberts, Interim Executive Director of the BC Green Party, invites you to join [a conversation on our vision for a New Politics for British Columbia](#). These virtual events will explore the following topics and are open to members and supporters:

February 28th: [Breaking the Mould](#)

March 7th: [The Monbiot Model](#)

March 14th: [A New Politics for BC?](#)

March 10 - 18th: Join MLA Adam Olsen to discuss topics relating to the provincial government. [Public Circle Community Meetings](#) are open to the public and completely non-partisan.

The Community Meetings start March 10th on Mayne Island, followed by the Saanich Peninsula (March 13th), Galiano Island (March 14th), Pender Island (March 16th), Salt Spring Island (March 17th), and ending with Saturna Island (March 18th). All dates and locations are in the link above.

On another note: Two BC Greens job postings [can be found here](#).

Gardening - Gary and Nancy

It may only be February, but we are already way behind in the garden. Imagine that – behind before spring has even sprung! We took a 6 week break for fun in the sun when we are usually getting our early vegetables started in the greenhouse. We did start our onions in the last days of December and had our house sitters keep them watered under lights in the greenhouse. They are already 30 cm tall! But just so all of you know, it is not mandatory to start your seeds as early as we do. Starting early usually gives us some fresh vegetables a bit earlier in the season and often allows us to squeeze an extra planting in during the growing season. However, this year we started all of our early season crops in the middle of February and we still expect to get some early greens and peas from them. Of course, being in Zone 9 allows all of us to grow outside throughout the winter and we came home to feeds of spinach, lettuce, kale, swiss chard and broccoli. We are looking forward to the overwintered cauliflower next month too.



Don't have a greenhouse to start seeds in? Don't have room in your house or don't want the "mess" of seed trays in your house? You don't need a greenhouse to start seeds or even to grow microgreens. Our greenhouse is not heated so you could start seeds in your basement or garage. Just germinate them on a heat mat and then provide them with good light for up to 22 hours per day. Good light is either a grow light or both a warm and cold fluorescent/LED light bulb. Plants need more hours of light with artificial light because there are way fewer photons than come from the sun. Starting your own seeds gives you the advantage of having transplants when you need or want them rather than when the nursery stocks them and you get to choose from a huge list of varieties rather than just one or two. We also like starting our own seeds because there is way less potential for introducing diseases, pests or weeds into the garden when you use your own compost (or sterilized potting soil) and grow everything on your property. A lot less can go wrong this way. Of course things can still go wrong like seeds not germinating, rodents eating your precious seedlings, forgetting to water those seeds (especially when they are on a heat mat)...

Starting your own seeds, in our opinion, makes gardening more fun and more complete. Doing it from beginning to end just makes sense and gives us a sense of accomplishment and independence (mostly, but not entirely from the seed companies though).

And if you want to raise your gardening game to the next level, why not consider joining the Peninsula Food Growers Club. We meet monthly and the next gathering will be at 1 PM on Saturday 25 February at the Nell Horth Room at the Sidney Library. Come and meet other food growers. Learn from them and share your expertise as well whether you are a beginner or an experienced grower. And if you have seeds to share, bring them along and we will have a mini-seed exchange as well as just having a fun time being with and talking to like-minded gardeners.

~Nancy & Gary Searing

Focus on Community

What does green space mean to you?

For some, it is a way to escape the concrete and noise of the city and for others it may be an appreciation of the harmony of a complex ecosystem. But the integrity of nature is being disrupted by species arriving from other parts of the world.

Some of those plants disappear into our environment without a disturbance, such as plantain. Then there are those which grow without difficulty, as there are no natural predators to keep them in balance. Just think about the Himalayan Blackberry and how that has taken over the edges of our cultivated lands and more.

On southern Vancouver Island, we are all too familiar with Scotch Broom and English Ivy, two particularly adept plants at conquering our green spaces. Many stewardship groups address this by focusing on one park, or one municipality, but plants transcend these borders. When we all work together as a collective community and focus on overall health, wellbeing, and environmental stewardship, we benefit the health of the entire ecosystem including people and plants.

Thankfully, there are those who have made it their mission to bring people together through positive collective action that inspires and empowers us to care for each other, and for nature.

That's when the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT) gets to work.

The [Greater Victoria Green Team](#) is a program of the charity, [Green Teams of Canada](#) (GTC). Since 2013, GTC has connected, built and empowered diverse communities through hands-on educational activities that promote health, well-being and environmental stewardship. The GVGT brings people together to run a wide variety of hands-on environmental activities including: community garden work parties, park

and shoreline cleanups, invasive species removal, nature interpretive walks, native tree and shrub planting... and more! GVGT uses these activities as a tool to inspire and empower people to take action in their communities.

The GVGT is all about collaboration and believes in the power of collective action. They work together with many organizations on the Saanich Peninsula such as UVic, District of North Saanich, Town of Sidney, District of Saanich, and Nature of Conservancy of Canada.

I spoke with three local GVGT leaders about this praiseworthy organization: Amanda Evans, Director of Programs & Partnerships; Maria Varem, Program Coordinator and Kaitlin Warren, Program Manager. All three are alumni of UVic environmental studies programs and are using their knowledge and skills to enable better programs and outcomes with the Green Teams. These dedicated women all realize the need to give community members a chance to support local environmental action through these restoration projects that they organize and manage.



Photo courtesy of the Greater Victoria Green Team.

Apparently, 50 to 80% of participants have never done the kind of activities that the Green Team organizes. It gives individuals and families a beneficial opportunity to work outdoors with like-minded people and create satisfaction from a job that encourages enhancing our natural environment. Many new members to the team return again and

again to other available opportunities, as the work gets you outside and enjoying nature while you help to support the local ecology.

If you feel the urge to get outside, do some hands-on work with others and meet community, consider helping the Green Team out. You will be amazed at the sense of accomplishment you get when you have filled that tarp up with another pile of invasive plants. The best benefit of all - the forest will thank you for being able to function properly again.

This link [Greater Victoria Green Team](#), will take you to a page showing upcoming opportunities for joining the community of people who love working to benefit their local green spaces.

This article only deals with invasive plants but there are many invasive animal species as well. To see a listing of well over 100 of these intruder species, please visit the Invasive Species Council of BC, [HERE](#). This website contains a wealth of information, including a learning centre, professional events, ongoing research and much more.

~Dan Kells

Of Interest

Monday February 27th: Elizabeth May webinar: The Climate Crisis and Why Nuclear Power is Not the Solution. This webinar will be hosted by the Environment & Society Program and co-hosted by the Student Union and STU Sustainability at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Time: 5pm Eastern, 2pm Pacific time.

Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZYfVxI33RXGqA1ZRI2_8zA

Monday February 27th: [Defending Indigenous Sovereignty through Divestment.](#)

Hosted by [Indigenous Climate Action](#) (ICA):

Indigenous legal traditions precede Canada's rights. ICA invites you to join the conversation hosted by Ellen Gabrielle, featuring Vanessa Gray and Sleydo from Wet'suwet'en Nation to learn about working together to develop strategies based on ways of life including

- What is divestment in an Indigenous rights and sovereignty context?
- What is risk?
- Indigenous legal rights and divestment.
- Land defense as financial risk.
- The Banks, the pipelines and the police. How sovereign Wet'suwet'en Rights Protect the Yintah.

[Register here](#). Time: 6 pm (Montreal); 2 pm (Pacific)

Community Information

Creatively United: Creative Solutions for a New World

This [Community Solutions Hub](#) was created in the spirit of collaboration and unity to address climate change and provide solutions for some of the most pressing issues that face our society today. Here you will find a multitude of positive and simple solutions, videos, events, information and resources that contribute to healthier, happier individuals and communities.

Please feel free to [contribute](#) your own ideas, tips, book and movie reviews, music, art, information and resources to the [Community Blog](#) and [share your events](#) plus check out others on the [Community Event Calendar](#).

February 25th: Come out and support the [March and Rally for Old Growth Forests](#) on Feb 25th in Victoria. This peaceful march and rally will begin at Centennial Square (City Hall) in Victoria at noon, proceeding to the lawn of the Legislature for a rally featuring powerful speakers and performers from 1:30-3:30

February 25th: February is also the time for the [Coldest Night of the Year](#) (CNOY) events - and this year is no exception. If you live on the South Island there are events scheduled in [Victoria](#) and [the West Shore](#) otherwise you can [find your local event here](#). Please consider joining one of the walks as an individual or on a team, or sending a donation. This year the Saanich North and the Islands (SAN, BC) Greens are walking with a diverse community group on the Saanich Peninsula. They have also started a donation page where 100% of the donations will go to the CNOY Victoria - Pandora. [This page](#) outlines how funds raised will be put to good use. If you would like more details of the walk on the Saanich Peninsula, please contact SAN [here](#).

February 26th: Animal Rights, Climate Change, and Zoonotic Pandemics: What are the Links? Presentation by Dr. Maneesha Deckha, Professor and Lansdowne Chair in Law at the University of Victoria

Sunday, February 26 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Gordon Head Recreation Centre, 4100 Lambrick Way, Victoria,

This talk will explore how the legal treatment of animals fuels climate change, zoonotic pandemics, and even other planetary crises.

March 4th: 10 am - 12 noon: Free Worm Composting Workshop

Learn how to set up and maintain a worm compost bin, sometimes called a vermicompost, and make high quality compost. [Register here!](#)

March 5th: 1 - 3 pm: The Gardens at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific: Introduction to Mason Beekeeping.

Come and learn how to support these tiny, important and beautiful little creatures!

Explore the importance of our native bees' incredible pollinating powers, look at the lifecycle of the mason bee, the challenges they face, discover how best to support them with attractive plants, and discuss the seasonal responsibilities of the mason bee keeper, when and how to release the bees and what to watch for over the summer season. Learn about the different styles of mason bee nesting boxes or houses available, how to select the best one and where to place them in the garden to meet yours and the bee's needs.

HCP Members \$30/Non-Members \$40

Register [ONLINE](#) or call 250 479 6162

Resilient Saanich: Updates have been made to the [Resilient Saanich webpages](#), including the project timeline and updates as the District moves into Milestone 3 of the initiative. You can view progress and participate in the process from the link above.

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Have feedback? What would you like to hear about in our monthly newsletter?

Please feel free to contribute a relevant article, interesting read or story!

For any of the above, or to unsubscribe, please contact us at info@sgigreenparty.ca.